

STAT

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STAT

1953 FERTILIZER PROGRAM IN HUNAN

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The proper increased application of fertilizer is the most effective method of increasing yields per unit of area. For the past 4 years, the farmers of Hunan have followed this method by accumulating more, and applying more, fertilizer. For example, in western Hunan the sandy soil of the Miao Autonomous Area was made more fertile by means of a well-coordinated program of fertilizer accumulation together with progressive agricultural techniques. In 1953, despite drought conditions, the entire region had a more than 15 percent increase in rice yields over 1952. Based on the statistics of a preliminary investigation, it is estimated that in 1953 there was a 10-20 percent increase in the use of fertilizer in Hunan, averaging about 30-50 piculs per mou.

The success of the fertilizer program in Hunan is due, first, to the farmers' recognition of the importance of the increased use of fertilizer and their whole-hearted participation in programs to accumulate fertilizer. Second, the area planted to green-manure crops has been gradually expanded. In 1950, Hunan had a winter crop of green-manure amounting to 3 million mou, 3,900,000 mou in 1951, and 8,380,000 mou in 1952. There has also been an increase in the number of hogs. In 1953, Hunan had 5,200,000 hogs, and it is estimated that this number will rise to 7,350,000 head in 1954. This will mean a substantial increase in stable manure.

Success has also been obtained in fertilizer application techniques. Farmers have been taught the methods of proper and periodic application instead of indiscriminate usage. The incorrect uses of chemical fertilizer have also been corrected.

Although there has been an increase in the amount of fertilizer, long range needs still warrant attention. From an investigation, it was found that Hunan certainly was not lacking in fertilizer resources. The population of 32 million could provide a huge amount of excreta for fertilizer. The 2,600,000 cattle and over 7 million hogs could provide an annual total of 41,250,000 piculs of fertilizer. If just these sources were fully utilized, each mou of cultivated land would benefit by at least an additional 10 piculs of fertilizer.

The solution of the fertilizer problem can be met by better leadership, particularly in fertilizer accumulation, application, protection, in the use of commercial fertilizers, and in the expansion of green-manure crop areas. On the basis of the amount of land planted to green manure crops in Hunan at present, it is estimated that this area can still be expanded from 100 to 200 percent. -- Hunan Agricultural and Forestry Bureau

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